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CIA Agent's Phony Ceasefire Offer to Thais Unveiled

BANGKOK, Thailand — A CIA agent sent the Thai government a phony ceasefire offer in the name of a Thai Communist insurgent leader, the U.S. Embassy said yesterday. The hoax was said to have been discovered because of an over-cautious errand boy.

Informed sources said the letter was posted in November from Sakon Nakhon, a province capital 350 miles northeast of Bangkok in an area where U.S. reports say 1,600 to 2,000 armed rebels operate.

The letter was signed "Chamras," the code name of a Central Committee member of the Communist party of Thailand in the northeast. The Nation, a Bangkok newspaper, reported.

It said the agent put no return address

Errand boy 'blew' the hoax

on the phony letter to Premier Sanya Thammasak, but the boy who mailed the letter had it registered and the government traced the registration to the agent's address in Sakon Nakhon.

The letter was reported to have contained a ceasefire offer in return for local autonomy in "liberated areas" near the Laos border.

The agent, reliably reported to be an American, was said to have hoped the letter would increase defections to the

government. It was not made clear how he expected this to happen.

The U.S. Embassy, which admitted the affair after three Bangkok newspapers broke the story, said, "The incident of the ceasefire letter . . . was a regrettable; unauthorized initiative."

It added that the U.S. Ambassador William R. Kintner, who presented his credentials only Nov. 29, "has directed categorically that no American official be involved in any activity which could be interpreted as interference in Thai internal affairs."

The incident was especially embarrassing to Kintner, who has been trying to play down his former career as a U.S. Army officer, including two years with the Central Intelligence Agency in Washington as a planning specialist on paramilitary activities in 1950-1952.

Student militants denounced Kintner as a CIA agent after his arrival and urged that the government watch him carefully.

The embassy statement said the incident "has been discussed with the appropriate Thai officials," but gave no further details and U.S. spokesmen would not comment further.

However, informed sources said an account of the affair in The Nation was accurate.

The Nation cited "an unimpeachable source" as saying the CIA had apologized to Thai authorities for the affair and that the agent who sent the letter — code-named "Lion" — actually had contacted insurgents in the northeast jungles and had sent the hoax letter with good intentions hoping to win more Communist defections.

In other developments:

- Rebel troops drove government soldiers from an outpost just outside Phnom Penh yesterday while, inside the city, terrorists killed one person and wounded 11 others by hurling a hand grenade into a crowded market place.